

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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R 180952Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7936
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CONFIDENTIAL OUAGADOUGOU 3667

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, UR
SUBJECT: BIO: AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR STEPANOVICH TIKOUNOV

1. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS ON VLADIMIR TIKOUNOV WHO HAS BEEN SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO UPPER VOLTA SINCE APRIL 1974 AND IS NOW BEING REASSIGNED TO YAOUNDE:

2. TIKOUNOV STRIKES US AS THE STEREOTYPE OF THE KHRUSCHEV ERA SOVIET BUREAUCRAT. WHILE HIS APPEARANCE IS FLACCID, OVERWEIGHT AND ILL-TAILORED, IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE IS INTELLIGENT, CANNY, AND A STRONG LEADER OF HIS MISSION. TIKOUNOV HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN WHAT WE SUSPECT HAS BEEN CLOSE TO POLITICAL EXILE FOR HIM IN THIS SAHELIAN CAPITAL. SOVIET-VOLTAN RELATIONS ARE ONLY PERFUNCTORY. WHILE THE SOVIET MISSION IS LARGE (PERHAPS 40 SOVIET PERSONNEL), THEIR PROGRAMS ARE LIMITED TO A LIGHTLY USED CULTURAL CENTER AND A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. VOLTAN STUDENTS RETURNING FROM STUDIES IN THE USSR HAVE DIFFICULTY OBTAINING GOOD POSITIONS IN THE VOLTAN GOVERNMENT.

3. TIKOUNOV IS EITHER UNABLE OR REFUSES TO SPEAK ANYTHING OTHER THAN RUSSIAN. WHEN DEALING WITH NON-SOVIETS HE ALWAYS HAS AN INTERPRETER AT HIS SIDE. TIKOUNOV

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HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP A WARM EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VOLTAN LEADERSHIP. HE REPORTEDLY OFFENDED THE DEVOUTLY MOSLEM VOLTAN PRESIDENT BY PRESENTING HIM WITH A CASE OF VODKA AS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT. ON ANOTHER OCCASION, DESPITE THE AMBASSADOR'S INTERVENTION, THE VOLTAN GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO HOST THE MOSCOW CIRCUS AT THE OUAGADOUGOU MUNICIPAL

AUDITORIUM. THE CIRCUS WAS FORCED TO PERFORM AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE.

4. DURING HIS UPPER VOLTA STAY, AMBASSADOR TIKOUNOV HAS RELIED HEAVILY ON QUOTE COMMERCIAL ATTACHE UNQUOTE, DMITRIY SAENKO. SAENKO IS BRIGHT, GREGARIOUS AND VERY CAPABLE AND APPEARS TO HAVE A NETWORK OF AFRICAN ASSOCIATES BOTH IN UPPER VOLTA AND IN NEIGHBORING WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES. FYI: VOLTAN-SOVIET TRADE IS VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT SO WE SUSPECT SAENKO'S COMMERCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ARE LIGHT. END FYI.

5. ADDITIONAL INFO ON TIKOUNOV

- A. BORN 1921
- B. LAW DEGREE- ALMA ATA 1942
- C. BRIGADIER GENERAL (INFANTRY) IN RED ARMY (REPORTEDLY)
- D. MINISTER (OR SENIOR OFFICIAL) OF INTERIOR OF RUSSIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC
- E. USSR EMBASSY RUMANIA 1969-1974
- F. AMBASSADOR, AEP TO UPPER VOLTA 1974-1978. KILLION

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